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The Resurrection of Christ as related to His Disciples.

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED ON THE

SABBATH FOLLOWING THE INTERMENT

OF

M R S . M A R Y L . G A L E ,

WIFE OF REV. WAKEFIELD GALE, PASTOR OF THE FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ROCKPORT.

BY REV. DAVID BREMNER.

PASTOR OF SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY BAZIN & CHANDLER,
37 Cornhill,
1861.

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Rockport, April 23, 1861.

REV. DAVID BREMNER :

DEAR SIR,—At a meeting of the First Congregational Church, last evening, it was unanimously voted, that the thanks of the church be presented to the Rev. David Bremner, for his able and interesting Discourse, last Sabbath, on the death of Mrs. Mary L. Gale, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for publication.

Yours truly,

J. R. GOTTL
In behalf of the Church.

Rockport, April 25, 1861.

DEAR SIR,—Permit me to express, through you to the Church, my grateful acknowledgments for the favor with which they have received the Discourse which it was my mournful privilege to deliver on the death of the Pastor's wife.

I could only regret my inability to do fuller justice to a character of such rare excellence, as that of our lamented friend. It gives me pleasure to comply with the request of the Church.

The manuscript will be placed at your disposal in a few days.

Very respectfully,

Yours,

D. BREMNER.

Deacon JABEZ R. GOTTL

S E R M O N.

Matthew xxviii. 6.

"HE IS NOT HERE: FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY."

IT is difficult to determine the exact position which the resurrection of Christ holds in the scheme of redemption. It is vain, perhaps, to attempt to point out the precise relation of this event to the distinctive work of atonement which He came to accomplish. And yet we are assured that His resurrection occupies an exalted place in the redemptive plan. It may be viewed as the culminating point of interest in the history of our Redeemer. He had proceeded onward, step by step, on His errand of love until He came to the Mount of Calvary. He had drank the bitter cup ; had, by His sacrificial offering, made a propitiation for the sins of the world. He had yielded Himself up to the power of the grave. Shall He remain under the dominion of Death ? Shall He continue in bondage to the Grave ? No. His days of humiliation have passed. He has borne

all the pangs of agony which were destined for Him. Now is to commence His reign of joy. He bursts the fetters of the grave ; rises triumphant from its embrace, and appears unto His sorrowing disciples.

The resurrection of Christ is a fact which receives great prominence in the Scriptures. Special pains are taken to establish this truth on the firmest basis. So strong is the evidence brought forward in support of it, that the man who would discard it from his faith must wilfully shut his eyes against the light. The sacred writers exalt this truth in their teachings. How they press it to their hearts ! How frequently they make it the theme of their discourse ! And how the fountain of their being bursts forth in joy whenever they turn their thoughts to the sublime mystery ! And why is such prominence given in the New Testament to the resurrection of Christ ? It is because it is a *central truth* in the Christian system. It holds an important place in the Divine economy for the recovery of our world from sin, and its restoration to holiness. It is an essential part of that grand system of agencies which God is employing in the salvation of believing souls. Hence should not this truth be dear to Christians ? Should they not press it to their hearts ? Should they not exult in the utterance of the angel, “ He is not here : for he is risen, as

he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Let me invite your thoughts, on this impressive occasion, to The resurrection of Christ in its relation to His disciples.

1. And the first point which claims attention is the fact that His resurrection is a *pledge* of their resurrection.

As He has arisen from the grave, so shall they, also, come forth at last from its embrace. Death cannot hold their redeemed forms in its cruel grasp. It must yield up its prey at the voice of the Son of God. The resurrection of Christ involves the *certainty* of the resurrection of His disciples. Not only are their souls ransomed from the death of sin, but their bodies, too, are to be rescued from the power of corruption. Believers are united to their Lord by a living faith. Nothing can sever the blissful connection. They fall asleep in Jesus, but awake again to a blessed life.

The Scriptures represent the rising of Christians as inseparably connected with that of their Redeemer. Is it a fact that He has come forth from the grave? It is equally a fact that they shall break its icy fetters, and stand forth arrayed in all the bloom of undying life. Hence our faith in this doctrine rests upon the firmest basis. Our

confidence may, indeed, at times, be disturbed. We stand by the remains of a beloved friend ; and witness the sad evidence of the triumph of the last enemy. The frail tabernacle has yielded before the assaults of the foe ; all is motionless where once was activity ; the functions of life have ceased their operations ; the voice which had so often cheered us is hushed in silence ; the eye has lost its lustre ; the hands are folded on the breast ; decay has commenced its desolating work. As we gaze upon the spectacle, we ask the anxious question, Can it be that this form, which is to be consigned to dust, shall be *reanimated*, and once more become the companion of the deathless spirit ? There is a momentary feeling of *doubt*. But the shadow vanishes as we recall the sweet words, “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

Infidelity cannot shake our faith in the resurrection. It may urge its objections. It may sneeringly ask, “How are the dead raised up ? And with what body do they come ?” We may not be able to meet its objections, or answer the questions it proposes ; and yet our confidence in the truth remains firm. And to every one who would rob us of our hope, we say, “Christ is the resurrection and the life.” He left the grave, no more to be subject to its power. He once more awoke

never again to slumber in the dust. He took on a deathless body. He was laid in the new sepulchre ; but in vain do you now seek for Him in this domain. “He is not here : for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” And, because He has risen, so shall we arise, through His power and grace, at the resurrection of the just.

The rising of Christ clearly demonstrates the fact of the resurrection of His followers. There are prophecies, dim foreshadowings, indeed, of this truth in nature. Do not the changes which occur at this season of the year point to this truth ? The transformation from the gloom of Winter to the radiance of Spring ; the vigorous working of hidden forces ; the bursting forth of life in field and forest ; the opening buds ; the appearance of flowers whose glories have been for a while concealed ; the new robes in which external creation decks herself,—are all suggestive of the resurrection. But such phenomena are only types. They do not *prove* that the body laid in the grave shall be restored to life, and clothed with unfading strength. Not until we come to the Divine word ; not until we are assured that Christ has risen from the dead, do we feel that we have a solid foundation on which to build our faith.

2. The resurrection of Christ ensures to His followers a complete victory over death.

Our Saviour "has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." How joyful are these tidings! How fitted to cheer our hearts, as we pass on our journey! Death is a despot. He rules with iron sceptre. He is also a mighty conqueror. Are not the traces of his victories all about us? From the beginning he has been performing his sad work. He is no respecter of persons. He cuts down the young, the fair, the vigorous, the useful, as well as the aged, the diseased, the infirm. Who of us have not suffered from the ravages of the foe? Who of us can ourselves escape from his assaults?

But Christ is the conqueror of Death. Has He not, in his own person, vanquished the foe? Has He not invaded his dominion, and achieved a complete triumph? He was taken down from the cross, and laid in the sepulchre; but He remained within the enclosure only for a brief season. No precautions that were taken could keep him in its bondage. The stone rolled against the door, the guard of Roman soldiers, the utmost vigilance of foes were vain to hinder the triumph of the Son of God. By virtue of His own inherent power, He restored His inanimate form to life, and came forth from the grave, no more to die.

The Saviour ensures to all believers a like vic-

tory. His resurrection renders certain their triumph. Hence we do wrong, my brethren, when we indulge in gloomy conceptions in regard to our last resting-place, or shrink back in terror at the thought of entering its portals. What dismal associations do we sometimes throw around this abode ! How we embitter life by our dark forebodings ! Does such a course accord with our holy faith ? Our Redeemer has passed through the grave ; illumined its darkness ; hallowed it by His Divine presence. And shall we shrink from following where Jesus has led the way ? Shall we fear to lie where He has lain before us ?

The early disciples seem to have had far more cheering views of death than are common among us. The catacombs at Rome exhibit the triumphant nature of the faith which animated the Christians who lived and died in the imperial city. The tomb-stones that have been discovered disclose the joyous hopes which sustained them. The disciple, according to their view, “is not dead—he ‘rests’ or ‘sleeps’—he is not buried, but ‘deposited’ in his grave, and he is always at peace.”

The Scriptures uniformly represent the death of the believer as a quiet slumber. He falls asleep in Jesus. He awakes, after a peaceful sleep, to a blessed life. And why is the grave thus disarmed of its terrors ? Jesus has achieved a victory over

its power. Hence, Christians, never think of the grave as a gloomy region. Look forward to it with serene composure. You need fear no evil. Your victory is sure; for the Saviour has vanquished death. Only cling to Him, and your redemption from its power shall be complete.

3. The resurrection of Christ is the *model* according to which His followers are to be raised.

Not only is He the model according to which their souls are to be moulded, but the model after which their decayed bodies are to be rebuilt. “ If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” It was, indeed, true, that our Lord arose with the very same structure with which He was laid in the grave. He had the same body during the forty days which He passed upon the earth. We see a reason for this in the fact that He wished to furnish to His disciples the fullest proof of His resurrection. But a transformation took place in His physical structure. This occurred, doubtless, at the moment when He ascended to His native home. Then He assumed His glorified body. And that is the form which he wears to-day in His Father’s house.

The radiant body of the Son of God is the *exact type* of the structure with which the Christian shall be clothed, when “ this mortal shall put

on immortality." He shall change "our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Of course, we are ignorant of the precise materials which enter into the glorified form of Jesus. But this we know, that the same elements which compose it, will go to make up the future bodies of His redeemed. The exact qualities, which distinguish Him, will be mirrored forth in them.

What a transformation is that which the body of the believer is destined to undergo ! There were given us foreshadowings of the glory which belongs to the future structure, when on the Mount our Saviour was transfigured, and "His face shot radiance, and His garments glistened, and His whole person put on the image and the overpowering brightness of the heavenly." Oh ! what glory awaits the Christian ! He is to resemble His Lord not merely in soul, but in body. How great the change between the present and the future structure ! This weak, infirm, liable to disease ; that vigorous, blooming, beyond the reach of injury. This often racked with pain, bowed down with toil, worn out with oppressive cares ; that free from every ill, from every weary burden, from every withering influence. This subject to the weakness of age ; that flourishing in unfading youth. This corruptible ; that immortal. This often proving a hindrance to the activity of the

soul, chilling its energies, obscuring its views of truth, keeping it back when it would rise, and soar amid regions of spiritual joy ; that every way fitted to be the companion of the soul in the high services to which it is forever destined.

4. I notice, as another consequence of the resurrection of Christ, that it brings to view the law of order according to which the process of development goes on in respect to His disciples.

The Son of God was subject to a fixed law of development. He attained perfection through suffering—through the various stages of self-sacrifice which it pleased the Father to appoint for Him. He reached the goal of life by first passing through the gate of death. Nor could any part of the earthly experience of our Lord be dispensed with. Every thing which He endured, every sigh He uttered, every burden He bore, was essential in order to fit Him to be our Saviour. He must ascend the heights of bliss by pursuing an ordained path. The law of order must be observed. Humiliation must go before honor ; suffering before joy ; ignominy before glory ; the cross before the crown ; death before life.

The law of the spiritual world is one of progress. God observes a definite plan in the discipline of His children for their future home. Nor

can He vary a hair's breadth from His prescribed plan. The different steps along which He leads them are all *necessary* to the full development of their being. They must pursue the same path which their Leader trod. They must pass through the grave, before attaining the *perfection* of their nature.

“Life is perfected by Death.”

Why does not God clothe the soul at once with a radiant form? Why is not the spiritual body evolved at the moment of dissolution, and allowed to accompany the soul to its home above? We can only answer that it is the *established plan* of God, that, as the soul is made perfect through the discipline of sorrow, so the body shall attain to its complete organization through the process of decay. “That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” The radiant form which the Christian shall wear hereafter, must be developed by means of death; must come forth from the ruins of the former structure. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The seed must be buried in the ground, and there germinate, before it can shoot forth in a golden harvest.

How wise are the arrangements of God! How beautiful is His law of order! Why, my breth-

ren, should we pass our days in the bondage of sorrow, or of fear? The friends who have died in faith may be ripening, even in their graves, for their eternal dwelling-place. We are hastening to the close of our course. But we die only to live a more glorious life. The flowers seemed to perish, but they are coming forth again in their smiling beauty. The fields are once more unfolding their glory. Spring is clothing all nature in robes of loveliness. We, too, shall stand forth after a brief subjection to decay, arrayed in the vigor and beauty of immortality.

“ Not first the bright, and after that the dark;
 But first the dark, and after that the bright;
 First the thick cloud, and then the rainbow’s arc,
 First the dark grave, then resurrection light.

’T is first the night—stern night of storm and war,
 Long night of heavy clouds and veiled skies;
 Then the fair sparkle of the Morning Star,
 That bids the saint awake, and day arise.

5. The resurrection of Christ is a prophecy of the complete redemption of his followers.

How comprehensive is the work which our Saviour undertakes to accomplish in our behalf! It is co-extensive with the evil effects of sin. It embraces our whole complex nature. Not only is our moral being restored to holiness, but this physical structure is made a trophy of redeeming grace. The body is the purchase of Christ. It is bought

with His precious blood. It is destined to be added a perfect organism to a perfect soul. Christ is forming for His disciples a *complete manhood*. He will render His grace illustrious in their entire recovery from the results of sin. His own rising from the dead is the pledge of their full redemption. Their bodies shall be ransomed from corruption, and re-united to their souls. There is a mystic chain which binds every believer to His ascended Lord. Never does the Saviour withdraw His care from His chosen. He keeps His eye upon the spot where each one of them sleeps in dust. Though now reigning on His throne above, He will tenderly care for the precious dust—will guard it with watchful eye, until the morning of the resurrection; and then fashion it into a structure of matchless beauty.

It is a part of His plan to redeem the bodies as well as the souls of His followers. Nor will His work be complete until His disciples shall all rise from their graves, stand before Him in shining forms, exult in the perfection of their whole being.

Hence, we mourn not for the pious dead, as those who have no hope. We consign them to the dust in the assurance that they will rise again to a glorious life.

The grave! It is not a gloomy region to the true believer. Oh no! There Jesus slept. He has illumined its darkness. Sweet resting-place!

" Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
 Invade thy bounds; no mortal woes
 Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
 While angels watch the soft repose."

Her, whose death we all so much deplore, we have followed to the grave in this hope of a blessed resurrection. Her body slumbers in the narrow house. *She* is not there, but in heaven. She is passing her second Sabbath with the Saviour, whom she so much loved. How blessed the communion! She is sharing His smile; beholding His glory; praising His matchless grace. We miss her from our fellowship. Never again shall we enjoy, here below, her choice companionship. The affectionate wife, the devoted mother, the cherished sister, the beloved friend, the faithful disciple, has gone from these lower scenes; but, blessed be God, her memory, and her radiant example, remain to us as a precious legacy.

And is it not due to ourselves, that we pause for a while, to meditate upon the history and rare excellences of our departed friend.

Mrs. Mary Louisa Gale was born in Colchester, Conn., November 29th, 1806. She was the daughter of Asa and Lydia Bigelow, and the youngest of eleven children. Her maternal ancestry were eminent for piety. Her mother was a devoted Christian. She lived to the advanced age of eighty-five years, and, upon her death-bed,

bore testimony to the faithfulness of God during the nearly eighty years which she had served Him; believing that she was converted at the early age of six years. She felt an ardent solicitude for the spiritual welfare of her children. Her great desire was to see them pursuing a holy life. She was unwearied in her efforts to train them up in the fear and love of God. Nor were her wishes ungratified, or her endeavors unavailing. When about sixteen years of age, this daughter entered upon the Christian life. She was the first case of religious awakening, after a long season of coldness in her native town. Visiting a place near by, where an interesting revival was in progress, she was led to serious reflection upon her spiritual condition. She returned home deeply impressed by the truth, and, in a few weeks, found peace in believing. Her conversion was the beginning of new life. Not only were several of the other members of the family brought to Christ, but a powerful revival commenced in the place.

Her experience was marked. She had a deep sense of guilt, and of her need of a Saviour. Sin weighed down her soul with almost crushing weight. In a note to her mother, while in this state of mental sorrow, she writes: "My sins bear me down to the ground, and fill me with anguish . . . This morning is the most gloomy one that I ever saw. Every thing is dark and dull.

Oh ! my sins that nailed my Saviour to the cross !” For weeks, she was thus burdened with sin. But the burden was removed by Him who giveth rest, and peace commenced its golden reign in her heart.

The history of a soul in its transition from the love of the world to the love of God is a history of peculiar interest. It is our privilege to be let into the experience of our friend in this momentous crisis of her life. In a letter to her oldest son on the twenty-first anniversary of his birth, she thus describes her feelings: “ I had long rebelled. My will was very stubborn ; but I took the lowest place I could find,—the most retired. I prostrated my body, that well-remembered night ; and resolved not to rise from my position until I had given myself to Christ. I remember a sweet peace stole over my mind ; and, from being in great mental distress, I became so calm, so quiet, that I insensibly fell asleep, and was found there, and taken to my bed after one o’clock. Early in the morning, I again sought the same retired room, but with very different feelings from any I had before experienced. . . . The feeling of my heart was just this : ‘ Here, Lord, I am ; take me, and do with me as seemeth to Thee good. Help me to serve Thee while I live, and do with me as Thou pleasest when I come to die. I am resolved to serve Thee, let others do as they will.’ ”

None doubted the genuineness of her conversion. There appeared, at once, an entire revolution in the whole bent and purpose of her life. She no longer lived for self-enjoyment. Every energy of her renewed nature was consecrated to her Divine Master. The completeness of her consecration to God is strikingly expressed in a written covenant, which she drew up a few months after her conversion. "This day," she says, "do I, with the utmost solemnity, surrender myself to Thee. I renounce the world, and all its vain amusements, and consecrate to Thee, my God, all that I am, and all that I have; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time, and my influence over others; to be all used entirely for thy glory, and resolutely employed in obedience to thy commands, as long as Thou continuest me in this life; with an ardent desire, and humble resolution, to continue thine through the ages of eternity."

On January 18th, 1824, she united with the Congregational Church in Colchester, under the pastoral care of Rev. Salmon Cone. And from that time to the hour of her death, she "witnessed a good confession."

The education of our friend was an object of attention on the part of her parents. There was an excellent Academy in her native town. This she attended for several years. She subsequently

became a member of a Female Seminary in Weathersfield, Conn. The Principal of the institution at the time was the Rev. Joseph Emerson, so justly celebrated in the history of female education, as a teacher of rare endowments and success. He aimed to develop the whole character of his pupils. A spirit of piety was mingled with all his instructions. He sought to direct the thoughts to spiritual themes ; to educate the soul for the skies. While a member of this Seminary, she made great proficiency in the various branches which were taught. The influences, which there surrounded her had, doubtless, an important bearing in making her what she was.

She was united in marriage, September 18th, 1828, to Rev. Wakefield Gale, then Pastor of the Congregational Church in Eastport, Maine. She entered, with true Christian ardor, upon the sphere which Providence had assigned her as a Pastor's wife. She took a lively interest in all the plans and endeavors of her husband for the good of his flock. She passed seven years in that field, faithful in every duty, and winning the confidence and esteem of all. It was with extreme reluctance that she left it ; for she had learned to love the people ; and it was hard to break the cords which bound her so firmly to them.

In May, 1836, her husband was installed Pastor of this Church. She came to this new field

of labor with her accustomed hopefulness and energy. Here she has lived for nearly twenty-five years. What she has been, and what she has done, you well know. And is not her name fragrant among us?

I should fail of answering the demands of this occasion, did I not allude to some of the more prominent elements in the character of our deceased friend.

It is obvious, I think, that she possessed a well-balanced mind. She was free from all eccentricities. Her mental character was symmetrical. Nothing seemed out of proportion. She had marked qualities ; and yet they existed in beautiful combination. Said a ministerial brother in conversation with me : "I was always favorably impressed by her." And is it not the case, that she uniformly produced a good impression on all, who might come in contact with her in the walks of life ? The power of a character so evenly balanced could not fail to be felt and acknowledged. We instinctively reposed confidence in her ; for she ever evinced a sound judgment. She shewed what a certain writer calls, "large, round-about common sense." Hence she was reliable. Seldom had we occasion to think she erred. Her opinion was valuable. She was thus one in whom "the heart of her husband could safely trust." Indeed, none who were at all acquainted with her,

could do otherwise than pay homage to her judgment. Friends went to her for advice, and found her a wise counsellor.

The deceased was pre-eminently distinguished for her prudence. The wife of a Pastor occupies, in some respects, a position of peculiar difficulty. How much the success of a minister depends on the character of his companion! But every one felt that she, whose loss we mourn, was admirably fitted for the sphere which Providence had assigned her. Did she not hold her position here for nearly twenty-five years, with unsullied reputation, and undiminished usefulness? And is not the secret of her successful life in this community to be found, in part, in that rare prudence which mingled so largely in her character, and which marked her whole intercourse with the people? This quality seemed interwoven with the very texture of her being. It ever attended her like an angel of blessing. How circumspect was her daily conduct! How eager to avoid whatever might tend to do injury! How careful in the use of the tongue! She practised the virtue of silence. Indeed, from her well known cautiousness in speech, we doubt not she was accustomed to offer the prayer: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Another trait which distinguished the deceased was frugality. This important virtue held a con-

spicuous place in her character. It ever sat enthroned in her household. Did she not exhibit a rare degree of practical wisdom in the management of her domestic affairs? Nothing was allowed to be wasted. Nor would she make any unnecessary expenditures. She *studied* economy. This was, with her, no low, selfish trait, but a noble, a governing principle. She practised economy as a Christian duty. She felt that all she had belonged to God. Hence she was frugal, not for the sake of hoarding, but that she might do the more to promote the higher interests of her family, and to advance the cause of her blessed Master.

She was one who set a high value upon time. She seemed ever to regard it as a talent intrusted to her for a wise purpose. No moment was permitted to run to waste. She was up early and late. Each day was filled up with appropriate duties. She carefully improved the little "fragments of time." It was this abiding conviction of the worth of time, which prompted her to those habits of industry which so much distinguished her. Life, in her view, was too precious to be squandered. Hence she was industrious. Did we not always find her busy? Was she not always bent on the accomplishment of some important task? No one ever seemed to me to obey more perfectly that rule of Jeremy Taylor:

"Avoid idleness, and fill up all the spaces of thy time with severe and useful employment."

Her sense of the value of time appeared in the order and system, which characterized her course. She was not one who led an aimless existence. She never acted at random, but endeavored to make the most of this short probation. Hence she was systematic in all her arrangements. She had a plan in regard to her household affairs, which she sought to carry out with unvarying exactness. Indeed, the habit of system was a controlling force in her character. And is it not owing, in part, to this worthy quality, that her life has been so fruitful in good?

Our friend was charitable in her judgment of others. She was ever disposed to put a favorable construction upon their motives and conduct. Evil speaking is a common vice in every community. But who of us ever heard *her* speak in disparaging terms of any? She was more eager to point out the virtues of others, than their failings. She was pre-eminently [a peace-maker. They who take delight in hurling the darts of detraction against character, found no encouragement from her. If persons were assailed in her presence, she would quietly ask, Have they no good qualities? This spirit of charity which she possessed, gave a bearing to her whole walk among us. Was she not peculiarly open and

frank in her intercourse with people? She placed confidence in them. No suspicious feelings ruled her heart. Sincere and honest herself, she attributed to others like qualities. She clothed them in the same garb which robed her own spirit.

And was she not distinguished by decision and energy of character? She was not one who pursued a hesitating, wavering course. She had a mind of her own. She was accustomed to exercise her own judgment in regard to every question of duty. Her sense of right was *law*. Having once determined the path of duty, she eagerly pursued it. Her life was marked by decision. She was also remarkable for the *energy* with which she carried out all her plans and undertakings. She never shrunk from effort. No task, once begun, was left unfinished. She uniformly executed her purpose, however much toil and self-sacrifice the achievement might cost.

One of the most characteristic elements of her nature was disinterestedness. She was not one who lived in the cold region of selfishness. No. She was rather one of whom it could be said with perfect truth: "She seeketh not her own." Her heart flowed out towards others. Has not her life among this people been one continued scene of practical benevolence? In humble imitation of

her Divine Master, did she not go about doing good ? Was not her heart an abode of generous feeling ? Did she not scatter good gifts along her path ? How fond was her affection for little children ! She had always a smile, or some token of good will for them. Had she not a kind word for us all ? How tender was her sympathy ! How many chambers of sickness have been illumined by her presence ! She was especially kind to the poor. Many a lowly heart has been made to rejoice by her gifts of love.

Her disinterestedness was conspicuous in the circle of friendship. She loved her friends with a pure and tender affection. Her regard shone forth in her intercourse, in her letters, in her efforts to promote their happiness. She shewed great *constancy* in friendship. She clung to her old friends, never forsaking them for new ones. Having once loved them, she loved them to the end. How she studied to render happy the objects of her attachment ! She seemed ever to bear them on her heart. Was she not perfectly familiar with the little *incidents* of their history ? She sought to have them share in all her joys. Her habits in travelling strikingly exhibit this fact. She would take special pains to treasure up whatever she saw or heard—not merely for her own gratification, but that she might communicate all to friends. She was truly one whose price was above

rubies. Many of us to-day can say of her, "Very pleasant hast thou been unto me."

Her affectionate nature found a congenial sphere in the circle of home. I need not, in this presence, speak of what she was in the bosom of her family. Did she not take the deepest interest in whatever pertained to the welfare of her household? Did not her presence throw a perpetual sunshine around it? How beautiful was the expression of her love! How self-forgetful! How tender as a wife! How devoted as a mother! Do not these crushed hearts afford a striking testimonial to the depth and intensity of her affection in the sphere of home?

But the crowning element in the character of our departed friend was piety. "At her conversion," as a near relative has well observed, "she seemed to settle the question then and forever, that she was to be a *Christian*, and to be a Christian with her was to *follow Christ*." It was her constant aim to please her Saviour by a career of holy obedience. Religion moulded her whole being. It was the moving force of her life. I but speak the feeling of all when I say, she was no ordinary Christian. She was eminently a woman of prayer. She loved to commune with her heavenly Friend. Nor were her "still hours" infrequent. She took time to be often and long alone with God. Never did she hurry her devo-

tions. She was one who had great faith in the power of prayer. It was her custom, on Sabbath morning, to call her children and domestics together ; and, after hearing them repeat hymns and portions of Scripture, and giving them appropriate instruction, to kneel with them before the mercy-seat, and to supplicate the divine blessing in their behalf. She loved the female prayer-meeting. How much she loved it, some of you well know. Indeed, her mature Christian character was the result of wrestling with God in prayer. Her piety was fed by daily supplies from the exhaustless fountain.

She was an active and self-sacrificing disciple. Her piety was not of a fluctuating type. It was not alive to-day and cold to-morrow. It was a living fountain ever sending forth its crystal waters. She was governed, not by feeling or impulse, but by steadfast principle. She lived for heavenly ends. She felt that she was not her own ; but had been bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Jesus. Hence she sought to evince her gratitude towards Him by a life of earnest service. Her love was no barren sentiment, but an active, controlling force. She expressed the glowing affection of her heart in a career of self-denial and of Christian earnestness. In the early stage of her religious history, she thus writes in her Journal : "Awake, my soul ; no longer remain

inactive, while there is so much to be done. Can I not form some plan by which I may do some good to poor, perishing sinners? Can I not do something to extend through the earth the knowledge of that Saviour, who, I hope, has saved me from eternal ruin?" And, through her whole subsequent history, she evinced the same eagerness to *do something* for her Master. Do we not recall with delight her Christian activity? The religious training of her family was an object of unwearied care. She sought not only to render home a pleasant spot, but to throw around it every holy influence—to make it a nursery of piety. These bereaved children can testify to her fidelity in their behalf. She took great pleasure in giving up her children to God in holy consecration. She was wont to attach great importance to the rite of infant baptism. In reference to one of her children, the oldest now living, she thus writes in her Journal: "To-day, we have taken our beloved child to the sanctuary, and dedicated her to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism. May the offering be sincere. O Lord, we have given ourselves to Thee, and now we have consecrated our child to Thee, in the presence of Thy people. May we love Thee with a perfect heart, and serve Thee with a willing mind. And do Thou take this little child into thine own arms, and bless her. May she, from this time, have a renewed and sanctified

heart, and be a precious lamb in the fold of Christ.” A similar consecration was made of her other children, when they were but a few weeks old. And these public acts of consecration were preceded and followed by corresponding ones in private. Another circumstance which shewed her interest in her children, is the fact that she made them, while young, members of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, by the payment of ten dollars. This she did with money of her own earning, or prudent saving, as a thank-offering to God for his goodness. The manner in which she noticed the anniversary of their birthday, indicates her interest in their welfare. On the return of these occasions, she uniformly arranged, not only that they should have some token of her remembrance and affection, but also that this should be done in a way to impress them with the shortness of time, the goodness of God in sparing their lives, and their obligations to love and honor him. She usually spent a short time with them, on these days, in personal conversation and prayer, if they were at home ; and, when absent, her present to them would be accompanied with an appropriate note, reminding them of God’s goodness, and of their indebtedness to Him. And in all her correspondence with her absent children—which correspondence was frequent and punctual—she manifested a tender concern for their spiritual as well

as temporal welfare. I am told that she taught them all the Catechism before they were eight years of age. And, as soon as they were able, she had each one read through the Bible in course.

She ever exhibited a peculiar interest in the young. She loved this class with an ardent love. Hence she was untiring in her endeavors to advance their spiritual welfare. Her labors in connection with the Maternal Association are a testimonial to her deep solicitude for their welfare. But her sympathies were hemmed in by no narrow limits. Hers was an *expansive* love. At her conversion, she began the practice, which continued through life, of devoting time and labor, besides giving money to the cause of benevolence. She took a lively interest in the work of missions. The personal sacrifices which she made for the promotion of this cause were neither few nor infrequent. But her work was done silently. Not until the books are opened will it be known *how much* she did to advance the kingdom of Christ.

The deceased was a cheerful Christian. She was wont, it is true, to cherish a profound sense of her own imperfections. We have seen that her convictions of guilt, at the time of conversion, weighed down her soul, almost with the burden of despair. And, throughout her Christian life, she had an ever-increasing sensibility to the evil of

sin. She was severe in her judgment upon herself. But, though thus accustomed to entertain a lowly sense of her own unworthiness, she was yet a joyous disciple. For she was in the habit of associating *Christ* with the idea of guilt. She thought of His wondrous Sacrifice. She turned from herself to the riches of His grace. She viewed Him as an Almighty Saviour. It was her habit also to take a cheerful view of life. Hope mingled largely in her character. Seldom did she borrow trouble, or indulge in dark forebodings. She always seemed trustful. Do we not dwell, with pleasure, on the remembrance of her genial disposition? And can we estimate the power which her cheerful piety had in commending the Saviour?

Her character was marked by consistency. We think of her as a consistent Christian. She walked with God, and is not; for He has taken her to His embrace. But, though dead, she still speaks to us; and will continue to speak in the sweet utterance of a radiant and pure example. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

Our friend died on Friday evening, April 12th, 1861, after a brief illness. Her last visits among the people were on Fast Day, when, after the second service, she called on an afflicted widow

whose husband had recently died suddenly, and on an aged female member of the church, who had long been confined to her home by feeble health. She had, in the early stage of her religious experience, expressed the wish that God would do with her as he pleased, when she came to die. It was His pleasure that her death should *come suddenly*. But she was *prepared* for the summons. She met the last messenger as we might have supposed she would. She had nothing to do but obey the summons of Jesus. Her work was done, and well done. When informed that the nature of her disease precluded all hope of her recovery, she received the intimation with perfect composure. She evidently had anticipated such a decision ; for she had shown great eagerness to have all her domestic matters properly adjusted.

Through the whole of her brief sickness, she exhibited a calm resignation to the Divine will. She spoke freely of her feelings in view of death. She did not expect, she said, to die so soon ; she would like to live longer for the sake of her family ; but that, perhaps, she should never be better prepared than now. She also observed, that she had tried to be faithful in her household, and as a Christian ; but felt that she was a great sinner, and needed mercy. She asked her husband if he thought she was a Christian—saying she had often feared she was not—but hoped the Lord

would not cast her off. To her husband, who, at one time, manifested deep emotion, she said : "We shall soon meet again in a better world." She left with him messages for the children, and the other members of the family ; and talked with them all personally, so far as her strength would allow. In reference to an absent friend, whom she would like to have seen, she said : "Tell her she must come out from the world, and be on the Lord's side." "Tell her—'Stand up for Jesus ' always and everywhere.'" To several persons, who came to her bedside, she gave her hand, and expressed the hope that they would live better than she had done. She expressed gratitude for all the kindness that had been shown her by her friends. When one said to her, in view of her sufferings : "I wish I could do something to relieve you," she replied, "You cannot. I must bear it alone. Christ is all my hope, and all my trust." To her husband, she said : "Give my love to the church ; tell them I love them *all* ; and hope they will live nearer to Christ than I have done." On the afternoon before she died, I called to see her. She desired me to pray with her. Before complying with her request, I asked, while standing by her bedside : "Do you enjoy the presence of your Saviour ?" She replied : "Yes." I again said : "I doubt not you trust in Jesus at this hour." Her prompt reply was :

"He is my only hope." I spoke of the peace which Christ gives his chosen, and inquired if this peace were hers. She answered, "Yes." To her oldest son on his arrival, she said : "Remember all that I have said to you ;" and, in reference to one who had not arrived : "Tell him to remember my last conversation with him." It was with great difficulty that she could speak after her end seemed near. Her thoughts were much upon her children in her last hours. She expressed the wish that they might keep in mind her instructions, and her efforts for their good. She requested her oldest son to repeat to her a favorite hymn, commencing :

" Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee."

Nothing seemed to escape her thoughts. On the evening of her departure, she calmly gave directions in regard to certain articles which would be needed for her after her death ; also in regard to certain matters of interest pertaining to the family. After supper, she signified to her husband, that they had better attend to family devotions. He read a portion of Scripture—then offered prayer. She had requested him to pray that she might have an easy death. The petition was granted. Her end was peace. She sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, and passed serenely up the narrow way to her eternal home.

" So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies the wave along the shore."

And what shall I say to these sorrowing ones ? Yours, my brother, is no common loss. A companion of rare worth has been taken from you. She, on whom you have so long leaned for aid, and encouragement, and sympathy, has been cut down. But it is God who has laid his hand upon you. He has sweetly interposed, and His touch is love. It is not needful that I should point you to the source of consolation in this trying hour. You know where it is found. You have, for many years, been directing burdened hearts to Jesus. And, I doubt not, you repair to Him in your bereavement, and find Him precious to your soul. There is much to comfort you in the remembrance of your deceased wife. She has acted her part well. She has finished the work given her to do ; come off victorious over all the evils of this earthly life. Her warfare is accomplished. She has joined her children in heaven, and those friends whose names are so fragrant in the church.

How exalted is her joy ! She is safe at home—forever safe in the arms of Jesus. Remember that she is not lost to you. She has only gone to her Father's house a little while before. You are left in the struggle of life. Christ has further

work for you in his vineyard. But the separation will be brief. She has only said, "Good-night." You will meet again in the morning of the resurrection. To you the simple message of the Master is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

And these children have suffered a heavy loss. Yes, severe is your affliction. Permit me to take my place among you as a personal mourner. A beloved mother has been summoned from your embrace. No more on earth shall her presence cheer you. But how much of her remains! Has she not left you a precious legacy in her prayers, her pure life, her faithful instructions? Be grateful to God for her care and love. Ever remember her teachings. Let her excellences of character be reproduced in you. Trust in that Saviour whom she so faithfully served, and who was her only hope as she entered the dark valley. Let it be your great concern to be fitted to join her in her state of glory.

Let this bereaved church learn lessons of wisdom from the chastisement of the Divine hand. God speaks loudly to you. Listen to His voice. One whose labors were abundant among you, and whose example was ever radiant with beauty, has been taken away. Be thankful that so rich a gift has been yours. And now that she, who accomplished so much in the church, has gone, see to it

that you redouble your diligence. Be more active in the Master's service. Live for God. Work, while the day lasts ; for "the night cometh, when no man can work."

This afflictive Providence has a message for us all. It speaks to the impenitent, and bids them be also ready to depart and be with Christ ! Oh ! shall any of us fail of heaven ? Shall any of us fail to have a part in the first resurrection ? Let us all choose the portion which our deceased friend chose. Let us accept of Jesus as our Saviour ; ever clinging to His cross ; live for His glory. Let us consecrate, not only our souls, but our *bodies*, to His service. Let us write holiness unto the Lord upon every feeling, and purpose, and faculty of our being. Then, though we die, though we return to the earth, we shall come forth a glorious flower from its bosom, in the spring time of the resurrection ; and rise to bloom forever in the Paradise of God.

O B I T U A R Y.

DIED, of Erysipelas, in Rockport, on the 12th inst., Mrs. MARY L. GALE, aged fifty-four years, wife of Rev. Wakefield Gale.

All who knew the deceased will assent to the opinion that so happy a combination of excellencies is seldom found, as were blended in her character. For the past twenty-five years she has exhibited to the people of her husband's charge, a faultless example as a pastor's wife. Benevolence, good will to all, pervaded her whole soul, and beamed brightly in her every action. Herself cheerful, she seldom failed to inspire hope in the desponding.

Many a one has felt a blessing descend as the door closed, after a short call from her. None more ready than she to sit by the sick during the weary hours of night, kindly soothing the sufferer, and directing to Jesus. The wasting invalid was ever remembered. Something to revive a failing appetite, accompanied with sweet words of sympathy, were sure tokens of her affection.

Did she find a widowed or feeble mother, over-tasked with a numerous family, she made it her cheerful duty to take one of the little ones to her own quiet home, and kindly provide for it. Most tenderly did she care for, and watch over the lambs of the flock. Often has the midnight

hour found her penning some poetic effusion for their rehearsal, or in some way devising for their interest and instruction. Long will her uniform kindness and love, and her untiring devotion to every good work, be remembered by the people of Rockport.

“The memory of the just is blessed.”

B.

A POEM,

Written on the death of Mrs. Mary L. Gale, wife of Rev. W. Gale, Pastor of the first Congregational Church, Rockport, Mass., and read at her funeral April 14, 1861.

BY REV. E. MASON.

Farewell thou dear departed one,
Thy toils are closed, thy journey run,
Thy cares have ceased, thy conflicts o'er,
And pains disturb thy peace no more.

It almost seems it cannot be
That we thy face no more shall see ;
So lately glowed the healthful flame,
So suddenly thy summons came.

’Tis sad to view thy vacant place,
In circles thou wast wont to grace,
To hear no more thy friendly voice
Which made so many a heart rejoice.

O how thy precious form is missed,
Where scenes of pure domestic bliss,
For lengthened years thy household crowned,
And shed their hallowed lustre round.

Deeply thy *partner* feels the stroke,
Which fondest ties asunder broke ;
Which veils his home with clouds of gloom ;
And hides a loved one in the tomb.

From youth to life's declining years,
Thou hast assuaged his rising fears,
Hast borne in all his griefs a part,
Poured balm upon the wounded heart.

In storm and calm a helpmeet stood,
Strengthening his hands in doing good,
Lightening each load of anxious care,
Joying in every toil to share.

Thine *offspring* feel a loss severe,
A *Mother's name*, of all most dear,
Save JESUS, who our ransom bought—
Our feet the way to glory taught.

They miss thy smile, thy faithful care,
Thy bright example, fervent prayer ;
While oft they pause and almost feel
Thy gentle presence with them still.

And in the temple of our God,
Where thou so oft with reverence bowed,
How sad to know we wait in vain,
To hear thy coming steps again.

The *Church* will miss thy gentle ways,
The voice that joined their strains of praise ;
And oft when bowed in solemn prayer,
Will scarce believe thou art not there.

They miss thee in that choice retreat,
Where teachers happy children greet,
And loving hearts, with heavenly truth,
Instruct the opening minds of youth.

There often thou hast toiled to win
 Their wayward feet from paths of sin,
 And point to tender lambs the road,
 To the great shepherd's bright abode.

The sick will miss thee, and the poor,
 Who shared thy sympathy, and store,
 And long their hearts thy name shall bless,
 Whose pity solaced their distress.

All hearts in sadness seem to bend,
 Thus to behold a star descend,
 Whose softened light so long hath shone,
 To guide and cheer wherever known.

But let no murmuring thoughts arise,
 The bow of promise spans these skies ;
 And voices from its radiance bright,
 Proclaim the Judge of earth does right.

Though clouds awhile his hand conceal,
 The future shall his ways reveal ;
 And wondering worlds rejoice to own,
 That righteousness maintains his throne.

O who can tell Jehovah's power,
 To guide the storms that round us lower ;
 So that these dark events shall prove,
 As channels to convey his love.

DEAR BROTHER, should these waves that rise,
 But waft thee nearer to the skies,
 Thy soul inspire with quickened zeal
 Thy great Commission to fulfil ;

And scores and hundreds in that day,
 From sin redeemed and taught to pray,
 Deck the bright crown thy head shall gain,
 Afflictions shall not prove in vain.

And should these children God hath given,
By new attraction drawn toward heaven,
Secure at length that realm of love,
The Furnace shall a blessing prove.

And should the throngs these aisles who tread,
And weep around the silent dead,
Tremble to view the monster power,
And learn the lessons of this hour ;

Here make the vow to live for God,
And seek redemption in his blood,
How loudly shall the anthem swell,
The Saviour hath done all things well.

Then let our hearts submissive say,
Thy will be done on earth this day,
Thy providential care we trust,
And own thy dispensations just.

With tears we bear our friend to rest,
Where Jesus hath a mansion blest ;
To wait the dawning of that day,
When death and graves are done away.

Companion, Mother, fare thee well,
Thou'st gone with ransomed ones to dwell ;
Beyond where sin its shadow throws,
Or sorrows break thy long repose.

And when the final day draws near,
And Christ shall in the clouds appear,
O be it ours with thee to meet,
And cast our crowns at Jesus' feet.

The funeral of Mrs. Gale took place at the church which was numerously attended by people of the different societies.

The assembly seemed very much affected in witnessing the solemn and very appropriate services, conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Thacher, Mason and others.

A long procession followed to the grave, at which the Hymn commencing "Unveil thy bosom faithful tomb," was sung with fine effect.

General sympathy is felt for the family, thus suddenly and unexpectedly bereaved.



